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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0247  
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RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0425  
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STATE FOR OBO, DS, AF/W, AF/RSA AND AF/EX  
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SUBJECT: GUINEA-BISSAU: AMBASSADOR ANNOUNCES OPENING OF  
BISSAU LIAISON OFFICE

¶1. The Ambassador cut the ribbon at the new liaison office in Bissau on July 6 remarking that the opening of the office and meeting rooms signified the first step toward reopening the U.S. Embassy. Officially, the office will not be open until a final security certification is completed later this summer.

¶2. Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities Maria de Conceicao Nobre Cabral represented the Government of Guinea-Bissau. The Foreign Minister noted the importance to Guinea-Bissau of the opening of the office and reiterated her government's desire for a quick return of the U.S. embassy. She said the U.S. presence is needed to lend support and guidance as the country struggles to escape its cycle of violence and improve economic and social development.

¶3. Television, radio, newspapers and a stringer from Reuters provided positive press coverage of the event. Immediately following the ribbon cutting, the Ambassador hosted a reception for approximately 70 government, diplomatic, business and civil society leaders at a hotel in Bissau. There was an overwhelming sense of encouragement among guests at the prospect of the return of the U.S. in a permanent capacity to Guinea-Bissau and many guests echoed the Foreign Minister's call for a speedy re-opening of the embassy.

¶4. The liaison office is in leased commercial space that has been approved by Diplomatic Security and OBO. Once the office is open, it will be occupied by one Locally Engaged Staff (LES), a part-time contractor and TDYers who require use of the space. A job description has been posted for a second LES position to handle growing administrative duties in preparation for moving the Guinea-Bissau Watcher position from Dakar to Bissau in summer 2008.

¶5. Visit Embassy Dakar's SIPRNet Web site at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/af/dakar>.  
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